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"ATOM-AXIS" MOOTED

Bonn - Paris - Rome Arms Triangle
Plans To Produce Nuclear Arms, Rockets

Italy, France and West Germany are planning to link forces in the production of atomic weapons and rockets, well-informed French and other correspondents have reported in the past few weeks.

On January 21st defence ministers of these countries met in Bonn to work out the details of the Bonn—Rome—Paris Axis, reminiscent of the wartime fascist Berlin—Rome—Tokio Axis. Official spokesmen of the West German Government have issued foggy denials that West Germany will cooperate in making atomic weapons for the new axis, but at the same time have admitted that West Germany will "make a contribution in scientific work and specific products which form part of nuclear weapons" ("Die Welt", Hamburg, January 22nd).

First disclosures about the new axis were made by the respected Paris newspaper "Le Monde" on December 24th 1957, which stated: "France will either decide to make atomic weapons itself, or it will make them together with West Germany and Italy, which have already reached agreement on this point."

More details of the new plan were given by the conservative West German newspaper "Frankfurter Allgemeine" on January 7th. The paper stated: "An arms triangle Bonn—Paris—Rome is beginning to take shape in West European armament production ... So far this cooperation has only extended to the so-called conventional weapons. In Bonn, particular hopes are set on the agreement reached by Defence Minister Strauss at the end of last year with the Defence Ministers of France and Italy. Details, which are still secret, are laid down in a protocol which may be enlarged into a treaty between the three countries ... The joint French-German development of atomic weapons is already getting under way on the testing ground of Colomb Bechar in Algeria."

On January 9th the "Frankfurter Rundschau" reported that "complete secrecy" was being maintained about the activities of the German technicians employed at the Colomb Bechar rocket base. "Tests have already been made with the medium-range rockets 'Monika' and 'Veronika'. Experts have declared that these rockets could be equipped with nuclear warheads without any difficulty."

In the foreign affairs debate in the West German Parliament on January 23rd, Social Democratic chairman Erich Ollenhauer asked for information about the military talks between West Germany, France and Italy. He said: "What do these military talks really mean? What is their military, technical and political background? Are these discussions intended to form a 'little Europe' which hopes to become the fourth atomic power alongside the three existing atomic powers? If we receive no answer to these questions, that will be answer enough for us."

Government spokesmen in the further course of the debate made no reference to Herr Ollenhauer's questions.

ALL-GERMAN PLEBISCITE ON ATOM-FREE ZONE?

The German people themselves in both East and West Germany should be asked in a plebiscite whether they want an atom-free zone in Central Europa, Otto Grotewohl, Prime Minister of the German Democratic Republic suggested on January 22nd.

Prime Minister Grotewohl made his proposal in a television and radio address to the whole German people. He stressed that the German Democratic Republic was ready to join with Poland, Czechoslovakia and West Germany in the creation of an atom-free zone in Central Europe, but that the West German Government had rejected the plan.

"We therefore propose that a plebiscite should be held in both German states to decide whether the German Democratic Republic and the German Federal Republic should belong to an atom-free zone or not," he said.

(Main points of Prime Minister Grotewohl's speech on next page.)

PLEBISCITE ON ATOM-FREE ZONE

Main Points of Grotewohl Speech

Here are the main points from Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl's speech on January 22nd dealing with the Rapacki Plan for an atom-free zone in Central Europe:

The German people are today deeply concerned at the danger of atomic war. Despite this, the ruling imperialist circles in West Germany are endeavouring to convert the German Federal Republic into an arsenal for atomic war and a rocket base. The American troops stationed in West Germany are already equipped with the most modern weapons of mass destruction. American death-bombers are cruising day and night over the western European NATO states. In the near future rocket bases and nuclear weapon dumps are to be established in nearly all western European NATO countries, particularly in West Germany.

Ordinary people throughout Germany are becoming increasingly alarmed by these facts... The Government of the German Democratic Republic is the spokesman of this basis public opinion. We are in favour of the creation of an atom-free zone in Central Europe, a zone which should include both German states.

In his letter to Prime Minister Bulganin, Herr Adenauer has claimed that the question of the atom-free zone is an unimportant partial question: this is incorrect; it is a vital question for the German people. The creation of an atom-free zone in Central Europe would be a first important step to banish serious dangers... Such a zone (including Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and West Germany) could be established as soon as the West German Government agrees. This would mean a pledge not to manufacture or station atomic weapons on the territory of these states. Agreement on the measures of control would then only be a technical matter.

If this plan is put into effect, it would prevent a further increase in tension in the heart of Europe, and a decisive step would have been taken towards the atmosphere of trust which is necessary for the solution of other international problems...

Adenauer has declared that the West German Government cannot participate in negotiations at which the German Democratic Republic is represented; this position is untenable, both juristically and politically. This declaration is only an excuse aimed at preventing all such discussions...

In order to demonstrate to the world the unanimous desire of the German people for security from atomic warfare, we propose that a plebiscite should be held in both German states to decide whether the German Democratic Republic and the German Federal Republic should belong to an atom-free zone or not. Such a plebiscite could make an effective contribution to the establishment of an atom-free zone in Central Europe.

W. German Opposition Parties Support Rapacki Plan

The main opposition parties in the West German Parliament gave their support to the Rapacki Plan for an atom-free zone in Europe, in a foreign affairs debate in the Bonn Parliament on January 23rd.

Erich Ollenhauer, chairman of the Social Democratic Party, with 169 seats in parliament, stated "The whole world is seeking for a new basis for discussions, and the Rapacki Plan for an atom-free zone is such a basis. We must ask the governments of the western powers why they are still delaying the serious discussion of such plans."

Erich Mende, chairman of the 41-man fraction of the Free Democratic Party also gave qualified support to the Rapacki Plan, under which Poland, Czechoslovakia and the two German states would renounce all atomic weapons. "This plan gives us the opportunity to make a new start" he said. "In any case it is military nonsense to station rocket ramps in the Federal Republic, which is scarcely larger than a narrow strip of towel."

On the other side in the debate were the spokesmen of Chancellor Adenauer's Christian Democratic Party, which holds a clear majority in parliament. Foreign Minister Heinrich von Brentano claimed that the Rapacki Plan was "an isolated measure which would not contribute to a reduction of tension, and would not improve the prospects of a genuine and controlled disarmament."

In addition, Foreign Minister Brentano stated, acceptance of the Rapacki Plan would inevitably lead to a withdrawal of all allied troops from West Germany, since these forces could not be expected to stay in West Germany if they were deprived of proper weapons.

Two days before the parliamentary debate West German Chancellor Adenauer had already rejected the Rapacki Plan in a letter to Soviet Prime Minister Bulganin. In his letter Chancellor Adenauer stated: "Your new proposals for disarmament have disappointed me. You propose the creation of an atom-free zone in Europe which should include the territory of the German state. It appears to me to be of decisive importance not to deal with the partial question of where atomic weapons should be stationed, but with the basic question of renouncing their production altogether."

Chancellor Adenauer's negative reply was severely criticised, not only in Social Democratic and other opposition newspapers, but also in many organs of opinion in West Germany which have hitherto given general support to Adenauer's policies.

Yes! Yes! A Thousand Times Yes!

Michael Foot Comments on Rapacki Plan

Dr. Heinrich von Brentano, Foreign Minister of the West German Republic, says a big loud NO.

He tries to impose a German veto on one of the most hopeful developments which has taken place in international affairs for months past.

So one of the questions facing the world is whether we are prepared once again to let Germany shape the future of Europe.

For months, there has been mounting anxiety among millions of people all over the planet about the dangers involved in nuclear weapons ...

Confronted with this prospect, many thoughtful people have been searching for a road towards a solution ...

And in the midst of these debates, Mr. Adam Rapacki, the Polish Foreign Minister, came forward with a specific plan.

He suggested that East and West Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia should be declared nuclear-free areas — no nuclear weapons should be made or stationed there.

Of course, this plan would have to be worked out in detail. Mr. Rapacki has prepared some details. But so far none of the Governments of the West has asked him what they are.

And, of course, Mr. Rapacki's plan by itself would not bring real peace to Europe. It would certainly need to be extended later to embrace Mr. Kennan's idea for the withdrawal of foreign armies too.

But it might be the best first step. It would at least impose a check on the crazy arms race. It might change the atmosphere in international relations and help breed the confidence on which later agreements could be based.

Certainly it is one of the ideas which should be discussed at a summit meeting.

Even the spokesmen of our stubborn, unimaginative British Government have stated — albeit in the most cautious and qualified terms — that the proposal for a nuclear free zone is being "closely examined".

And it is at this point that Dr. Brentano of West Germany barges in with a flat, brutal rejection of the Polish idea which no-one in the West — certainly not Dr. Brentano — has ever had the courtesy to ask Mr. Rapacki to elaborate ...

No-one can doubt the passionate desire of the Poles for peace. Their country has been ravaged by war in the past thirty years more than almost any other.

To suppose that Mr. Rapacki's proposal is some kind of Communist trick is both insulting and childish.

And yet it is to this new Poland that Dr. Brentano gives a diplomatic slap in the face.

He would hardly have dared to do it if he thought that such brusque methods would cause irritation in London and Washington.

Of course, in one sense, London and Washington have got what they deserved.

The British and American Governments have spent so much of their efforts in the past six years building up Dr. Adenauer and West Germany as the most favoured and powerful State in Europe that their pupil has become arrogant.

But there's no time to be wasted in weeping over the past.

The Labour Party has a whole series of excellent proposals for fighting the nuclear peril (including support of the atom-free zone) which it wishes to see pressed at summit talks.

This week comes the good news that these demands are to be backed in a national campaign.

Now a new demand must be added to the list.

We must get a British Government prepared to state quite baldly that the future peace of Europe is NOT to be settled by German dictation.

That demand, I believe, would be powerfully backed by a great mass of the German people who show no enthusiasm for Dr. Brentano's resort to Hitlerite diplomacy.

("Daily Herald", London, January 24th 1958)

ANTI-NAZI WRITER DIES IN BERLIN

One of East Germany's most prominent literary figures, Max Schroeder, died in Berlin on January 14th at the age of 57 after many months of serious illness.

Max Schroeder, who was driven into exile by Hitler, was one of the joint authors of the two-volume "Brown Book of the Hitler Terror", published throughout the non-nazi world in 1933 and 1934, which gave for the first time a documentary report of the fascist terror in Germany and the frame-up of the Reichstag Fire Trial. After internment in French and Moroccan camps in the early part of the war he escaped to the United States, where he was one of the editors of the anti-nazi weekly "German American". He returned to Germany in 1947, and played a large part in building up the "Aufbau Verlag", one of the best publishing houses in the German Democratic Republic. He was also active as theatre and art critic. In 1957 he was awarded the Lessing Prize.

More Money for Education, Health

Increasing sums are being devoted to education and health services every year in the German Democratic Republic, according to official statistics published in Berlin. In 1955, over 73 marks per head of the population were devoted to education: in the current year the figure will rise to over 83 marks. In 1955 more than 347 marks were spent for the education of each child between the age of three and eighteen: in 1958 the sum will rise to 404 marks. In 1955, over 89 marks per head were spent on public health services: in 1958 the sum will be over 104 marks.

It should be noted that these figures show a rise in real expenditure, since the purchasing power of the East German mark is steadily increasing, instead of decreasing as in most western countries.

East Germany has five students for every 1000 of the population: West Germany has just over half as many — 2.8 students for every 1000 of the population.

West German Industrialists Worry About the Future

By Gilbert Badia

West German industrialists are beginning to be seriously worried about the future. At the time of writing, the beginning of 1958, the battle for markets is clearly becoming sharper, and a new stage has been reached in the fight for foreign markets. For West German industry it is vitally necessary to maintain and expand its position in world commerce. The attitude of the West German leaders cannot be grasped unless this is taken into account.

There are today certain indications that the economic boom which has been called the "West German miracle" is coming to an end. This boom made it possible for West Germany to recapture, in the years 1950 to 1955, second or third place amongst the industrial nations of the capitalist world.

The following table shows the progress of industrial production in West Germany in the past few years, taking the year 1950 as 100:

	Industrial Production	Percentage Increase
1953	139	9.4
1954	155	10.9
1955	178	16
1956	192	9.8
1957 (first half)	200	7.4

It can immediately be seen that the rhythm of development, which steadily increased up to 1955, fell back in 1956. A more detailed study of the production of that year shows that the top of the curve was reached in the summer. Since then, production has certainly continued to increase, but the rate of growth is clearly more feeble.

It is interesting to break this down into the various branches of industry. The sector affected first and most seriously is building... No new factories are being built, and capital expenditure is being devoted more and more to the modernisation of existing installations, and to the rationalisation of production methods...

The export industries are in particular steel, engineering, cars, electrotechnical goods and chemicals. These industries, apart from the chemical industry, have only been able to maintain or expand their production because of the growing external demand. If exports should fall, or have a ceiling imposed upon them, these powerful industries will run the risk of stagnation, or even the beginning of a real crisis, with unemployment and a reduction in real production.

West Germany is an exporting state. There are few large countries where exports amount as here to 15 % of total production, and in certain industries to 50 % or 60 %. West Germany must export in order to import numerous raw materials which she does not produce herself. The smallest economic difficulties in North or South America, or a restriction of demand in certain European countries could have serious repercussions on the West German economy. In particular the economic ties between the USA and West Germany are so close, that it has been stated that "a sneeze in Wall Street may mean pneumonia in Frankfurt". It is well known that the signs of a recession are growing in the USA: hence the anxiety of the West German capitalists.

West German exports in 1956 were distributed between the continents in the following way (in millions of marks):

Europe	20,605
Africa	1,472
America	4,925
Asia	3,243
Australia	385

This table shows that the main market for West German exports is western Europe, which absorbs more than two-thirds of the total exports. West Germany has taken first place in the foreign trade of the neighbouring capitalist countries. Her position as creditor in the European Payments Union gives her considerable means of bringing pressure to bear.

But the West German export trade is running up against a number of difficulties, since she is selling much more than she is buying, both in Europe and in the under-developed countries of South America and the Middle East. In the long run this situation poses insoluble financial problems.

We have thus seen that West German prosperity depends upon the maintenance and expansion of exports, and that this is meeting more and more difficulty in the capitalist markets. This has led to the idea of developing trade with the socialist world, and in particular with China.

The important part played by West German industrialists at the Leipzig Trade Fair (in the German Democratic Republic) is proof of this desire to "open up to the east". Until now trade with the Soviet Union, Poland and Czechoslovakia has remained within very modest limits, but the possibilities in this direction are huge, and West German industrialists know this...

There should be no mistake, however. This does not mean in any way that West German imperialism has abandoned its aggressive aims, or that rearmament will not be pushed ahead, or that the idea of undertaking adventures against the socialist family of nations will be abandoned. We believe, however, that it does mean that West Germany understands it is no longer possible to play only one card, that of rearmament.

If our analysis of the developing economic difficulties is correct, if these difficulties are increasing, this will mean that West Germany is not so free in her decisions as she might appear to be.

(Condensed from "Democratie Nouvelle", Paris, January 1958)

"Strikers Should Be Shot" — West Berlin Official

A West Berlin transport official who told striking busmen that they should be shot has been lightly censured by a West Berlin court, which ruled that he "acted too hastily".

The official, departmental director Hermann Zielke, shouted his threats at the busmen when they struck for higher wages in June 1957. He was quoted in court as saying: "You ought to be shot... If only Hermann Goering could come and clear up this „mess". The busmen's union representatives called for the sacking of the official. When the case came before the West Berlin Labour Court on January 14th, the court ruled that Herr Zielke should be removed to another post, but rejected a claim that he should be downgraded.

200 PAGES OF MILITARISM

"German Soldiers' Calendar" Once Again

The annual "German Soldiers' Calendar for 1958", a lavishly produced almanach consisting of over 220 pages of unadulterated militarist propaganda, is on sale freely throughout West Germany.

In previous years, ever since 1954, GERMAN REPORT has presented its readers with an analysis of the contents of this calendar. Here are some notes on the 1958 edition:

The calendar, published by the Schild Verlag, Munich, which until recently received a considerable monthly subsidy from the West German government, opens with an introductory message from nazi admiral Erich Raeder, which is reproduced on this page. It is only necessary to note that Raeder was sentenced to life imprisonment by the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg on October 1st 1946. The judgment stated: "It is clear from the evidence that Raeder participated in the planning and waging of aggressive wars... He carried out unrestricted naval warfare, including warfare on neutrals... He admits that he passed on the order to shoot allied prisoners of war." Raeder was released from prison on health grounds in 1955.

The "Soldiers' Calendar" appears to specialise in selecting nazi war criminals to write the annual introductory message. In 1956 the message was from Field Marshal Georg von Kuechler, sentenced to 20 years imprisonment by an American court on October 27th 1948 for a whole series of war crimes including the murder of 230 sick Soviet women in a hospital; and in 1957 the message came from Field Marshal von Manstein, sentenced to 18 years imprisonment by a British military court in December 1949 for war crimes including the murder of many Gypsies and Jews.

The question of rehabilitating the nazi war criminals runs like a thread throughout the whole volume. On page 33, for instance, nazi Colonel General Hans Friesner states: "Many of our comrades, who did nothing else in the war but fulfil their difficult duties, were confined and are still confined in allied jails. Revolting slanderers can libel, without punishment, our soldierliness, and can call us 'militarists' and 'war-prolongers'. Our young people have been presented with ugly distorted pictures of the former

GROSSADMIRAL
Dr. h. c. ERICH RAEDER

Der deutsche Soldatenkalender hat sich durch sein unbeirrbares Festhalten an der soldatischen Überlieferung, aber auch durch seine Aufgeschlossenheit gegenüber der wehrpolitischen Entwicklung, im Laufe der Jahre eine große und treue Lesergemeinde erworben. Möge auch das sechste Jahrbuch 1958 mit dazu beitragen, die nationale und soldatische Selbstbesinnung unseres Volkes zu stärken, „auf daß in jungen Händen nicht alte Ehre bricht!".

Kiel, d. 14. IX. 1957.

Dr. h. c. Erich Raeder.
Großadmiral.

Translation

The German Soldiers' Calendar has won a large and faithful circle of readers in the course of the years through its undeviating maintenance of soldierly traditions, and also through its ready acceptance of military-political developments. May the sixth almanach for 1958 make its contribution to the strengthening of the national and soldierly consciousness of our people "so that the old honour shall not be broken by young hands!"

Kiel, November 14th 1957

Dr. h. c. Erich Raeder
Grand Admiral

German Wehrmacht." Continuing his article, General Friesner calls on the young officers of the new West German Wehrmacht "always to hold up as patterns the great deeds of their soldierly ancestors to the recruits entrusted to them."

On page 38, nazi Major General Hans Korte returns to the same theme: "After 1945, unfortunately, as a result of the victors-justice at Nuremberg and so-called 're-education' (really training in slavery), there was an unworthy campaign of defamation against the upper military leadership."

But apart from these direct attempts to deny that the German officers were war criminals, the "Soldiers' Calendar" devotes most of its space to "inspiring" short stories and articles, telling of "great military traditions", and relating "thrilling" stories of hard battles, mainly on the eastern front in World War Two.

But all this is just background noise: the really threatening part of the almanach is represented by the last 25 pages, which list the militarist organisations at work in West Germany today. On these pages there are listed no fewer than 1199 separate organisations which bring together the old soldiers of Kaiser Wilhelm and Adolf Hitler. They are all there, from Kaiser Wilhelm's cavalry right down to the SS Panzer Corps "Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler". Incidentally, a total of 41 separate organisations of former SS men are shown in the listing. It is interesting and disquieting to note that the number of such militarist organisations is growing steadily from year to year. In 1955, the calendar noted "only" 749 such organisations; by 1956 the number had grown to 888; in 1957, a total of 1158 were represented; and this year the number is 1199.

I should be emphasised that this "Soldiers' Calendar" is by no means a hole-in-the-corner production by some small group of neo-militarists. It is beautifully printed, with many four-colour illustrations: and the West German Ministry of the Interior has purchased advertising space in the calendar to appeal for recruits (including former Wehrmacht officers) for the "Federal Frontier Service", which is described in the advertisement as "The modern, fully-motorised German police troop".

A LAYMAN LOOKS AT E. GERMANY'S REACTOR

By George Lohr

It is a long time since I went to college, but even after all these years I still retain a feeling of guilt about the grey hairs my absolute inability to grasp even the essentials of physics contributed to the noble head of our science professor. It is understandable therefore that I approached my visit to the first atomic reactor station in the German Democratic Republic, put into operation last December, with a good portion of humility.

While the driver skilfully guided the bus filled with foreign journalists over the icy Autobahn towards our destination, I endeavored much less successfully to pick the brains of my distinguished colleagues. Were they keeping their wisdom to themselves or were they also refugees from a dark and secret past, peopled with prematurely greying physics professors?

Baffled Journalists

To a great extent the latter, I am afraid. Some of my self-confidence returned as we stood, augmented by a large number of German journalists, in the reactor station hall of the project — located in Rossenburg near Dresden — and listened to a short lecture by Professor Heinz Barwich, director of the Central Institute for Nuclear Physics of the German Democratic Republic. There were quite a few besides myself peering over shoulders into the notebooks of other reporters. The scientists who guided us evidently had already had some bitter experiences with the press, because they begged us not to write nonsense and rather to check and double-check our stories with them.

However, since further technical discussion might only compound my ignorance, I shall simply set down here what a layman sees when he visits such a workshop of the magic tomorrow. In the center of all attention, of course, is the massive structure that houses the reactor itself. It is about 23 feet high and slightly more in diameter. The actual reactor zone is only less than two feet in diameter, but it is surrounded by a thick coating of extra heavy concrete. At the bottom of this concrete fortress is the uranium, giving forth radiation and energy. In the case of this reactor, the energy produced is 2,000 kilowatts which, we were told, makes it a reactor station of medium size.

This reactor station serves mainly as a training center for young physicists and for purposes of research. But it also produces isotopes for industry, agriculture and medicine. The warm air created in the process is not used, but goes out through the chimney. However, the German Democratic Republic needs atomic power very badly for its rapidly expanding industry. Its area has not been blessed by nature with waterfalls sufficiently high for the operation of hydro-electric power stations and, because of the division of Germany, it is denied access to the hard coal of the Ruhr. It is therefore planned to put the first atomic power station, with a capacity of 70 000 kilowatts, into operation by 1960.

Protection Measures

That is the big job ahead, and it no doubt will require a tremendous amount of planning, research and engineering skill, judging from the multitude and intricacy of machinery and instruments that confront the visitor at this present reactor station. Most impressive of all are the mechanical devices, and the safety measures generally, which exist for the protection of the staff. In the big reactor hall itself the air is changed twelve times every hour via big ventilators that are operated from a special building. If radiation in any of the rooms should threaten to reach a dangerous degree an automatic warning system with red lights and sirens goes into operation. While we were in one of the laboratory rooms, a scientist showing us around demonstrated this by bringing a small piece of radio-active cobalt near the danger-detecting apparatus. Immediately the lights and sirens went into action.

Every person working in the project also wears what looks like a fountain pen clipped to the breast pocket of the white duster garment. Actually it is a dosimeter, an instrument for measuring radiation, which the wearer checks frequently. There is again a special room, with a scientist in charge, where these dosimeters are checked. Other physicists are constantly under way throughout the building with measuring instruments, checking radiation. Even the warm air that goes out through the chimney is continually checked for radiation so that no possible danger can arise for the population at large. Here it should be said that, in addition, the project is some distance away, according to internationally valid control agreements, from places of habitation.

Worn-out Uranium

What happens when the uranium in the reactor "wears out" and has to be replaced? Such a need will not arise, we were told, for about another year; but when it does, the process is accomplished almost automatically. The top of the reactor structure is something like a revolving stage or turntable with a number of hatches, all securely battened down. Through these openings material can be inserted, then the lid is fastened, the table turns to another — lower — opening, and the insertion ist completed.

Most amazing of all are the so-called "hot chambers" where research and testing with radio-active material is done. They were not yet in operation when we were there, so that they could be shown. You reach them through a whole labyrinth of safety passages. Preparatory to working there the scientist strips to the skin and gets completely different clothing. When he has finished his task, he returns by passing through various control stations and a complete shower is a "must", to make sure that every possible contamination is washed off. (The waste water from the project, by the way, is drained into concrete tanks where it stays until there is no more danger whatsoever of its being in the slightest degree radio-active.)

Hot Spots

The four "hot chambers" themselves look somewhat like big furnaces with cast iron swinging doors at least one foot thick. If one is given to gruesome images, they can also be compared to dungeons in medieval fortresses where the most hated captives were kept in isolation until death. But in these chambers it is life that benefits because it is here that the scientists do much of the labor that will make crops more plentiful, ease the burden of work and cure the afflicted.

Bubble, Bubble

However, experimenting with radio-active materials is somewhat more dangerous than stirring the alchemist's cauldron. It is done by remote control or, to be specific, with artificial hands. They are weird looking things, with long arms and made of what looks like some sort of rubbery substance. We saw one of the scientists do tricks with them, operating the mechanism at least four feet away from the actual manipulation. It took him just a few seconds to make the hands open a box of matches lying on the table and take out one of the matches and strike it.

This scientist is one of the thirty engineers and nuclear physicists who operate this project. Almost all of them are quite young. The chief engineer himself, Gerhard Ackermann, is only 28 years old. All of them have been trained in the Soviet Union, and Soviet engineers and nuclear physicists also gave their advice in building the reactor. In fact, most of the machinery and instruments that went into this project were given by the Soviet Union. But the staff which now operates the station is completely German.

Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary have atomic reactor stations as well and they were also constructed and put into operation with large-scale Soviet aid.

This about exhausts my store of information. But after all, touring an atomic reactor station is not like visiting a soap factory or a machine shop, interesting though that is as well. Walking around such an atomic project, a lot of thoughts go through your mind. Most likely other laymen remember as the high point of their visit as well the glimpse they are permitted — via an optical contraption on the reactor platform — deep down into the pit of the actual oven. Here then is the stuff, a sort of greenish mass, that has given our era the title of the "atomic age". This is the stuff that presages a new industrial revolution, that can power our planes, bathe the most remote hamlet in an abundance of light and turn waste desert lands into blooming orchards.

Peaceful Purpose

But this is also the stuff that triggered the death of hundreds of thousands at Nagasaki and Hiroshima and that, so the scientists tell us, can carry the scourge of present-day poisoning into the bodies of our progeny still far removed. By coincidence, this reactor in the German Democratic Republic was dedicated to its peaceful purpose by Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl on the same Monday in December as the NATO nation leaders gathered in Paris to discuss the stationing of atomic weapons in West Germany. But the coincidence does point up a frightening contrast.

Professor Barwich and the other scientists who spent so much of their time explaining to us the workings of the reactor station did not bother to propagandise us about its peaceful purposes. That is taken for granted here. It is also taken for granted that these men, like the majority of their fellows in other lands, want to use their knowledge so that this green mass will not turn into a Frankenstein monster to destroy us, but rather that this giant will spend his vast energies for the benefit of mankind.

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BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

There is so much negative to be reported about West Germany — renazification, remilitarisation and so on — that one sometimes tends to overlook positive and encouraging things that happen there. For this reason it is a real pleasure this week to be able to report signs of a positive development.

It all started with the publication of the details of the shocking case of the Offenburg teacher Ludwig Zind. GERMAN REPORT has given the details in recent issues, but here is a quick recapitulation:

In April last year Herr Zind, teacher at an Offenburg grammar school, met a Jewish textile merchant in a local cafe. Zind indulged in a wild anti-Semitic outburst, crying "It is my opinion that far too few Jews were gassed... I shall liquidate you yet... I am proud of the fact that during the war I, together with my men, broke the necks of hundreds of Jews with spades."

The outburst was reported to the school authorities, and to the local educational authorities, but despite repeated efforts no action of any sort was taken against the teacher until December, when the story was finally published in the weekly newsmagazine "Spiegel".

The report aroused a storm of protest in liberal and progressive circles throughout West Germany, and on January 17th this year the influential "Federation of German Teachers' Associations" took large advertisements in four of the leading West German newspapers to protest against the Zind case. (It is significant that a fifth influential newspaper rejected the advertisement.)

The advertisement stated: "The biggest West German teachers' organisation, in the name of its 100,000 members, notes with shame that this man is working as a teacher. We protest against the fact that the responsible quarters have remained silent in this matter... The unteachableness of such morally and spiritually inferior elements, which destroyed Germany yesterday, today threatens the Federal Republic. He who is silent today makes himself responsible for the misery of tomorrow."

"As responsible teachers and citizens we ask:

Who hushed up Zind's frightful statements from April until December?

What action was taken in this matter between April and December by the headmaster of the Grimmelshausen Grammar School in Offenburg, the Education Office in Freiburg, and the Ministry of Culture of Baden-Wuerttemberg?

"We demand that the public prosecutor start proceedings against Zind for crimes against humanity."

Not only was this hard-hitting advertisement published in a number of the most important newspapers, but it also formed the main news item the same evening in the news bulletin of the West German television service.

Under the pressure of a public opinion now thoroughly awakened the Provincial Parliament of Baden-Wuerttemberg on January 22nd, by a large majority, called for a speed-up in proceedings against Herr Zind, who had already been suspended from duty following the original revelations published in the "Spiegel". It is heartening to note that public feeling on the case was so strong that even the deputies of Chancellor Adenauer's Christian Democratic Union were forced to vote for the motion.

GERMAN REPORT will keep you informed of further developments in the case.

Of course it is important not to attach too much importance to an individual case like this: renazification and remilitarisation are still being pushed ahead. But it does show that there is a very large body of public opinion in West Germany which is seriously concerned about recrudescent racialism and fascism; and these forces deserve the support of all right-thinking people.

Just before we went to press came the news that Herr Zind had finally been arrested on charges of crimes against the person, slanders against the dead, and threatening the commission of an indictable offence.

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If you live in Britain, and have school-age children, you may well find that they read the cheap brightly-covered booklets of the Sexton Blake Library, two copies of which appear every month.

My attention has just been drawn to one of the latest issues, entitled "The Last Days of Berlin", written by a man under the name of Peter Saxon.

Now I have nothing against detective stories, and I remember reading the stories of Sexton Blake with relish: but I never expected to see him turned into a nazi collaborator. For that is what this latest volume amounts to. The story is quite shortly this: British intelligence discovers in May 1945, just as Berlin falls to the Soviet army, that the nazis have complete blueprints for making the V 3, a long-range rocket with atomic warhead. Sexton Blake is sent to Berlin, and in a bloodthirsty jamboree of violence and murder he convinces the SS girl who has the plans (she is "tall, slim and blonde, with brilliant blue eyes", of course) that she will best fulfil the wishes of Adolf Hitler by handing them over to the West.

Here is Sexton Blake speaking: "Only the West can help Germany now. You must help the Western allies to help you... Your own Fuehrer, time and time again, made speeches about the menace of militant Bolshevism."

The beautiful SS girl hands over the plans, of course, and then thinks (I quote again): "She had been right to give him the brief-case and the plans it contained. The V 3 should be used as intended against the enemies of the Third Reich."

It is not only the main theme of the booklet which is so unpleasant: all the concomitant detail is given in the same tone. Throughout, the SS officers depicted are brave, athletic and blonde: the Russians are bloodthirsty, dirty, sweaty subhumans. A sub-hero of the booklet is, logically enough, a beautiful White Russian girl who has been running a nazi espionage organisation behind the Soviet lines.

But it is a horrifying phenomenon that only thirteen years after the end of the war, British schoolboys should be told, in the form of a detective story, that Britain fought on the wrong side in World War Two, and that the real enemies are the peoples of the Soviet Union.

Astrology Corner

It is said that Mr. Dulles, worried about the way things are going, recently consulted a Red Indian medicine man about the prospects for 1958.

The medicine man consulted the necessary entrails at great length, and then announced the verdict: "I can only say that 1958 is going to be a much better year for you than 1959."

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